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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. Thurmond).

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Dr. D. James Kennedy, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Fort Lauderdale, FL, offered the following prayer:

May we pray.

Almighty and most loving Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this day. We thank Thee for this Nation, this goodly land in which You have placed us. And I thank You for this Senate which bears the awesome responsibility of guiding and directing the affairs of this Nation. And I pray this day Your blessing upon every Member of this body, upon their wives, or husbands, upon their children, their families. I pray that You would give them Your guidance and Your wisdom and discernment that all that they do may be done for the betterment of our Nation and for the glory of God.

We pray, O Lord, that You will be with them in their efforts this day. Help them in all that they do, and use it all for Your glory.

This prayer I bring in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will begin a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the tobacco bill with the Ford amendment pending regarding tobacco farmers. Following disposition of the Ford amendment, it is hoped that further

amendments will be offered and debated during today's session.

The Senate may also consider any other legislative or executive items that may be cleared for action.

Therefore, rollcall votes are possible throughout today's session.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Missouri is recognized to speak for up to 20 minutes.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I thank you very much.

THE SO-CALLED TOBACCO BILL

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, today will be a defining day in Washington, DC. It will be a defining day in the Congress of the United States. More specifically, it will be a defining day in the U.S. Senate.

This is a day on which we will make very important decisions, decisions that will reflect whether or not we believe that government—invasive, bigger, stronger, more consumptive government—is something to be fostered and encouraged, or we are going to say that we believe the people have the ability to make good decisions on their own and that we will not promote a government which will take more and more from the people, leaving them with less and less, not only in terms of resources but leaving them with less and less freedom.

We are going to be talking about the so-called tobacco bill today, which unfortunately is more of a smokescreen for a tax increase and big government than it is anything else.

The Democrats have rightly suggested, have appropriately stated, that the fate of this bill really rests in the hands of Republicans. And I believe that those of us who are on the Republican side of this Senate will make decisions, and we will either decide to pass this massive tax increase, to pass and institute this set of bureaucracies, the scale of which has not been seen in a long time in a bill in Washington, DC—we will either decide to pass an invasive sort of intermeddling by the Federal Government in a wide variety of the affairs of individuals, or we will decide that we believe that the appropriate action is not to tax the American people with another \$868 billion in tax, is not to create 17 new boards, commissions, and agencies to try to micromanage everything from convenience stores and gas stations up to grocery stores and larger institutions that sell merchandise.

But the Democrats are right in suggesting that the decision will be made on the Republican side of the aisle. We will make a decision about whether or not to go forward with the tobacco bill, the smokescreen for the world's biggest tax increase this year. I don't know of any proposed tax increase this year that can match this proposed tax increase. And the direction we take will be a test of the way in which we lead, and it will be a test of the Republican leadership of the Senate.

Republican leadership has a responsibility to lead to Republican ideals and call us to our highest and best as people, and to give us the opportunity to be responsible as individuals and to shrink the size of government, not to

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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